

Beloit Historical Society  
Confluence  
845 Hackett St.  
Beloit WI 53511

Address Service Requested

The Vision of the Beloit Historical Society is to make history  
a focal point of community pride and to serve as a constant  
reminder to the community of its great and diverse heritage.  
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# Confluence

Volume 21, Issue 3 - October 2014

## Tales from the Hanchetts By Ron Klein

James and Caroline Hanchett were builders. They had seven children. Their stories reflect the boom and bust rhythm of life in 19th Century America—through separation, reunion, success, loss, death, and to the next generation the Hanchetts' legacy offers insight, nostalgia, and sometimes even goose bumps.

The couple purchased 40 acres in Beloit that included the homestead and a limestone quarry for one dollar from James' old boss. This quarry supplied the bedrock for several foundations in Beloit including Hanchett Hall which still stands at the corner of Broad and State streets in downtown Beloit. But James Hanchett lost a great deal of the fortune in the bank scare of 1857 and also when the United States government called bonds in 1861 due to the civil war. After the birth of Warren, the youngest of the Hanchett children that same year, James headed west, possibly to reunite with his oldest son George in Colorado, and strike it rich. Caroline having just given birth at the age of 44 was left to manage the house, raise the children, and see to the family businesses in Beloit.

Due to his asthma George, who was born in 1838, was sent away at an early age to live with his relatives in California. It is unclear whether the two men found each other. But father and son did find gold. In 1865, James headed back to Beloit to stake his claim. Caroline used to sit at the top of the widow's peak at the homestead and watch for James on his homecoming trips. However, on his

way home he developed pneumonia and died at home shortly after fulfilling his mission. Caroline was at a loss. She wrote to George to come home and help with the farm. She was now 48, managing the Hanchett's businesses in Beloit and raising her

remaining children, the youngest only 4 years old at the time.

George obeyed. He came home to help, but quickly developed breathing problems as he had in his childhood. He had always seen himself as GW Hanchett—the Great Western Explorer returned to Colorado to manage the family's assets.

George, however, met an untimely end. In 1868 at 30 years old he went missing. The family sent out search parties to no avail. He was last seen alive celebrating after a long trip with \$900-\$1000 dollars in his pocket, intoxicated, and in the company of a "strange

unknown individual." In 1870 a group of railroad surveyors came upon a body picked clean and hanging from a tree. A notebook in the pocket identified, "George Hanchett, Beloit Wisconsin." Someone got him very drunk, took him out into the wilderness of the mountains, robbed him and murdered him by hanging him from a tree. His body hung for two years before it was discovered. Caroline tried unsuccessfully to sell the house in 1874 by placing an ad in the Beloit Free Press. Finally in 1883 she sold the homestead to her son Charles for \$4500. She lived out the rest of her days in Chicago with her younger sons who owned Hanchett Paper Company there. She was buried alongside James in Oakwood Cemetery here in Beloit.



Hanchett-Bartlett Ghost Hunt  
**REVEAL DINNER**  
**Fri., Oct. 24**  
6-9 p.m.  
Lincoln Center  
\$35 members, \$40 non-members

**After 9 weeks of analysis, come hear  
the EVPs and ghost hunter experiences**  
*Ghost Hunters admitted for free!*

  
wisconsinpit.org

The Hanchett-Bartlett Home has many stories. Some of them are more recent than you might expect. Volunteers have wild tales of a ghostly woman moving things around in the dining room, getting goose bumps near the stairs on the second floor, and seeing a farm hand that still comes to work near the barn.

In July brave and curious patrons met up with the Wisconsin and Illinois Paranormal Investigation Team at the Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead to see if they could uncover the source of the stories. Their findings will be presented on October 24th at the Hanchett-Bartlett Home during the "Reveal Dinner." Members \$35, Nonmembers \$40.

**Get Info and tickets at [beloithistoricalsociety.com](http://beloithistoricalsociety.com) or call (608) 365-7835**



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**Hometown People With A Common Concern**

BHS Lincoln Center hours are noon to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and by appointment on Saturday. Call 608-365-7835.



**Beloit Historical Society**  
Founded 1910

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**Newsletter Contributors:** Ron Klein, Meghan Trimm, Sue Kurth, Paul Kerr; layout by Jen Scott.

Board meetings are the third Thursday of every month at 4:15 p.m. and are held at Lincoln Center, 845 Hackett Street.

Confluence is published quarterly for the membership of the Beloit Historical Society to inform readers of Society activities as well as educate them on the history of Beloit. The Beloit Historical Society manages two sites, Lincoln Center Museum with main offices at 845 Hackett St. and Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead, 2149 St. Lawrence Ave. For further information please call (608) 365-7835 or e-mail us at [Pkerr@beloithistoricalsociety.com](mailto:Pkerr@beloithistoricalsociety.com). Or see our web site at [beloithistoricalsociety.com](http://beloithistoricalsociety.com).  
The Confluence is sponsored by



**Dick Gerhard Steps Down from Board of Trustees**

Richard Gerhard served as board treasurer until his wife's health deteriorated and he resigned from our board. His beloved Dawna passed away soon after. Dick was able to serve us well as treasurer. We thank him for his time and talents. We hope we get the chance to work with him again.

**Meghan Trimm to Fill Treasurer's Seat**

Meghan Trimm, who has been volunteering in the BHS office, recently agreed to serve on the board as treasurer. Meghan will fill out the remainder of Dick's term. Meghan is full of energy and enthusiasm, making her a welcome addition to our already hard-working board.

**A Query from Canada**

Reach out to the Beloit Historical Society Community for genealogical information!

Attn: Query  
Beloit Historical Society  
845 Hackett St.  
Beloit, WI 53511

**From Carol in Canada:** Seeking Family/Business papers and correspondence of the **Goodhue family:** Dr. Josiah Cosmore Goodhue who came from St. Thomas, Middlesex, later in Elgin, Ontario to Chicago, IL about 1835 and then settled in Rockford/Beloit Area. Also his Brother Charles Frederick Henry Goodhue who came from Stanstead/Sherbrooke, Quebec and with his son George settled in Beloit in 1837. Materials connecting the Goodhues to the Shaw and Bigelow families is of interest. [research@elgin-middlesex-historyproject.org](mailto:research@elgin-middlesex-historyproject.org)

**Hanchett-Bartlett Open House**

Last year over 200 people toured the house and commented on how they loved the event and seeing all the decorated trees. We offered photos with Santa on our antique sleigh, old-fashioned carolers, and live flute and harp music. We know this year will be even better!

**Sponsor a Tree!**

The Society invites businesses and organizations to sponsor a decorated Christmas tree at our 2014 Open House. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact Mike King at 608-751-5365 or [kingm@ci.beloit.wi.us](mailto:kingm@ci.beloit.wi.us) or call the Historical Society at 608-365-7835.

**See the Trees!**

The Hanchett-Bartlett Committee is planning another great Christmas Tree Event! Stop in to see the home-stead full of uniquely decorated holiday trees. Free and open to all.

Friday, Dec. 12: 4-8 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 13: 2-8 p.m.

**Our Flag**



The city's flag was designed by Beloit College professor Theodore Lyman Wright and was adopted as Beloit's emblem on May 10, 1916. The flag's design was the outgrowth of the 1916 Beloit Pageant theme, "From the Turtle to the Flaming Wheel."

A green field on the left of the flag represents prairie/pasture land, with the yellow to the right representing ripened grain. A blue band separates the two, standing for the Rock River. In the white circle is a flaming wheel surrounded by the dammed mill race area of the river. A Christian cross is at its center.

To continue the symbolism:

- The flaming wheel is represented through the turbine, spoke, flange and vane.
- The white and red (colors of molten metal) can stand for the flame, furnace, foundry and factory of our past and present.
- The flaming wheel also gives a nod to the Wheeler Eclipse Windmill, the Fairbanks Morse engine and the A.P. Warner speedometer.

Did you know that the Beloit flag was flown over Antarctica in 1957?

Originally the 10 x 6" banner had flown in front of Beloit State Bank, but the bank's president, Arthur B. Adams, offered the flag to Operation Deepfreeze III. Beloit John "Dave" Reimer was a member of the U.S. Navy and part of the 10-man crew headed by Rear Adm. George Dufek of Rockford who commanded U.S. Naval support services in Antarctica. The flag was raised on Dec. 5 at the South Pole, Murdo Sound, Little America IV and Byrd Station.

**From the Archives**

The Beloit Historical Society has some very interesting artifacts. This section of the newsletter deals with an interesting box donated by Grace Bennis about 10 years ago. It is a religious, wooden box Catholic Priests would take with them to administer care and Communion for the sick who were receiving their last rites.



**SPONSOR THE CONFLUENCE**

The Society thanks Daley, Murphy, Wisch & Associates for their sponsorship. If you would like to sponsor a newsletter, we welcome your help!

**Wish List**

vacuum cleaner

Rider mower (48"-52" cut) ☺

donations needed!

**Thanksgiving Dinner:**

Here are a few recipe ideas from the Young Ladies' Sewing Society of the First Congregational Church in Beloit in their 1896 cookbook.

**Mrs. Hull's  
Roast Turkey**

"Tie Two Pieces of cloth to the legs [of your turkey] to keep them from getting too brown. Put in a scorching hot oven until well browned on all sides, pour boiling hot water over it, then cover closely, shut off the stove and go to church. The turkey will be nice and tender when you come home."

**Mrs. B.W. Josselyn  
Roast Turkey with Chestnut Stuffing**

"Singe, draw, stuff, and truss an 8 lb. turkey. Rub over with salt; spread with 1/3 cup of butter and 1/4 cup flour creamed together. Put on a rack in a dripping pan. Dredge the pan with flour, baste as soon as the flour is brown and repeat often. For basting melt 1/2 cup butter in 1/2 cup boiling water. Bake in a moderate oven 2 1/2 hours.

**Chestnut Stuffing**—shell, blanch, and boil 1 pint of French chestnuts. Mash fine, add 1/4 cup butter, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon pepper, and 1/4 cup cream. Add 1/4 cup cracker crumbs mixed with 1/4 cup butter."